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Mr. Arnaud de Borchgrave
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Dear Arnaud:

It was good to see you at Bill Buckley's memorial service.

I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to present Judge Webster before your reporters and editors and for the lunch.

It's encouraging to see the type of coverage you provided the CIA culminating in the excellent Bill Gertz article today.

Many thanks to you, Wes and your fine staff.

Sincerely,

Bill Baker
William M. Baker

How Webster puts truth and teeth into CIA operations

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Diplomacy has been the hallmark of William Webster's first 12 months as director of the CIA — trying to make peace with a wary Congress in the wake of the Iran-contra affair while not further damaging sagging agency morale.

Officials inside and outside the agency say Mr. Webster has moved swiftly, but cautiously, to recast and reform the Central Intelligence Agency at one of the most trying times in its history.

The caution that has marked his tenure at the CIA was clear from the start. Mr. Webster declared at his swearing-in ceremony last May 26 that he intended to work closely with policy-makers "to put truth into action."

The action quickly followed. Since taking over the CIA, Mr. Webster has:

- Replaced six of the top eight CIA officials with his own appointees.
- Fired two field operatives implicated in the Iran-Contra affair and demoted and reprimanded several senior officials, including three who have resigned.
- Opposed restrictive legislation that would force the agency to notify Congress within 48 hours of all covert operations.
- Established new guidelines for internal monitoring and review of CIA covert operations, for formulating interagency intelligence analyses without political biases, and for CIA officials testifying before Congress.
- Beefed up the CIA inspector general's office by bringing in more officials from the operations, administration and intelligence directorates.
- Appointed a senior CIA official to direct a new audit unit to monitor the security of new U.S. embassies and other facilities.
- Brought together clandestine

operatives, analysts and security officials in a counterintelligence center.

But Mr. Webster acknowledged in an interview with The Washington Times: "It's much too early to declare victory on what I've done."

Mr. Webster took over the CIA at a time when it was reeling from congressional criticism of its role in Iran-Contra, although agency officials contended that the problems were caused by the National Security Council getting involved in operational covert action.

Now, with a year under his belt, Mr. Webster, who gave up the opportunity to earn a

potential six-figure income in private legal practice to take the director's job, feels he is "on track" at the CIA, according to William Baker, the agency's chief spokesman and a close Webster aide.

He hopes to remain CIA chief during the next administration, regardless of which party wins the White House, Mr. Baker said.

Sen. David Boren, Oklahoma Democrat and chairman of the intelligence committee, believes Mr. Webster is "off to a good start." The CIA chief, he said, strongly respects "the rule of law" and has moved "carefully" in making changes.

"But he has not acted in a wholesale way that would undermine the morale of professionals there," Mr. Boren said. "His approach should help supporters of the agency in Congress get the financial support it needs to make sure its programs can be run effectively."

In an era of budget cutbacks, that's the kind of support Mr. Webster and the agency clearly need.

In an effort to improve relations with the congressional intelligence oversight panels, Mr. Webster announced in December new guidelines for managing review of covert action programs and for conducting

interagency intelligence assessments in order to prevent "political influence" from tainting estimates.

He also established new regulations that outlined circumstances when CIA officials are permitted to hesitate before answering questions that could possibly damage agency sources and methods of operations.

Mr. Webster said he hopes the new rules will balance the inherent "tension" between the CIA chief's responsibility to protect agency secrets and Congress' role in accounting for intelligence activities.

But the director said he believes the president will veto current legislation that re-

quires the president to notify Congress within 48 hours of all covert operations. He said the legislation was the result of Congress' feeling "compelled" to take action against the CIA as a result of the Iran-Contra affair.

"There's a constitutional question there, as well as many other things," Mr. Webster said. "And they're not clear cut. The only way you live with them is by trying to deal with the tension area in a way that doesn't make the other guy feel he's being lied to."

"We've picked up a little of that reputation in the period just before and just after the Iran-Contra thing, and that's made it rough in terms of what they [the intelligence committees] are willing to accept," he said. "But we're not giving away the store in our relationship."

The Washington Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Washington Times A-5
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune _____

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Perhaps a more difficult challenge for Mr. Webster has been taking disciplinary action against popular CIA employees implicated in the Iran-Contra affair, said a senior agency official, who asked not to be identified.

The official insisted that all the actions taken by Mr. Webster were the result of individuals "not being candid" or because of discrepancies in statements they made to Congress or agency auditors.

But the new director appears most concerned about the agency's handling of its counterintelligence role.

Since the 1970s, the CIA has been rocked by several major failures, including the 1986 defection to Moscow of former CIA officer Edward Lee Howard; the penetration of the agency for more than 30 years by a Chinese communist agent, Larry Wu-Tai Chin, and by Czech spy Karl Koehler, both CIA translators; and the compromise in 1985 of agency secrets by Sharon Scranage, a CIA clerk in Ghana.

The spy cases resulted in the compromise, and in some cases the death, of U.S. agents and damaged the CIA's ability to conduct clandestine operations, intelligence officials said.

Mr. Webster acknowledged that past agency counterspy efforts were hampered by a lack of coordination and by a backlash within the agency against the policies of former CIA counterintelligence chief James J. Angleton.

Mr. Angleton directed a large program until he was forced out in 1974 and his section dismantled after public disclosures of alleged wrongdoing. The counterintelligence function was downgraded and spread among the agency's various operations directorates.

CIA counterintelligence, Mr. Webster said, has suffered from "a lack of a broader picture of the issues because each little group was handling its own compartmented thing."

In addition, he said, "I found some still-existing fear of a police-state mentality that was probably generated during the Angleton days. This is not an internal Gestapo. This is an external shield to improve our effectiveness against hostile intelligence penetrations."

Continued

John Greany, a former CIA general counsel, said Mr. Webster's efforts to improve CIA counterspy programs are his most significant contribution. The new counterspy center, he said, "shows that the agency under his direction is moving to address a very serious problem. . . .

"Every time you have a change in senior management there are problems, and some CIA people felt the judge moved too quickly in taking in-house action on the Iran-Contra affair," said Mr. Greany, now executive director of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers. "But all in all he's done a good job."



Photo by Ross D. Franklin The Washington Times
William Webster, director of central intelligence, strives to improve rapport with Congress without "giving away the store."